



# SPRING 2002

## Report to the 32<sup>nd</sup> District



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### **Committees:**

Children & Family  
Services - Vice chair  
Criminal Justice &  
Corrections  
Appropriations

Dear Neighbors,

The 2002 Legislative Session was one of the toughest in decades. Yet despite the many challenges facing us, we finished our work in 60 days- and have many accomplishments to show for it.

Some of the important measures we passed include:

- Breaking the gridlock of the past three years and passing both a statewide and regional transportation plan. Both will go to the voters for final approval.
- Adopting a state budget that trims state services but maintains our commitment to public education and the social safety net that protects children, families, the elderly and the disabled.
- Drug sentencing reform legislation that will break the cycle of addiction and crime.
- Key measures to enhance women's safety.
- A bill to maintain the long-term stability of the Promise Scholarship program for low and middle-income students.
- Legislation that helps protect children from bullying in schools, allows families to take paid sick leave to care for ill family members, and provides unemployment benefits for victims of domestic violence.

Inside this newsletter, we will describe some of the important measures that passed in more detail. We appreciate the many letters, emails and phone calls we received from many of you this legislative session and thank you for the opportunity to serve as your state representatives. Please be sure to continue to contact us with your concerns about the many important issues affecting our community.

Sincerely,

Rep. Ruth Kagi

Rep. Maralyn Chase

### Representative **Maralyn Chase**

**While I am at home  
in the District you  
can contact me at:**

PO Box 55951  
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### **Committees:**

Higher Education  
Trade & Economic  
Development  
Capital Budget

# *Representative* **Maralyn Chase**

## **THE "IT" ECONOMY**

Our district has tremendous opportunities in the technology-driven sectors of our economy. The stakes are high; the potential rewards for our citizens and our state even higher. Success in retraining dislocated workers and preparing our young people for their leadership role in this [IT] information technology/global economy depends on an unprecedented degree of collaboration. This includes public agencies and institutions, community organizations, students, unions, workers and businesses. We are working together to host a forum on "Education & the Innovation Economy" later this spring at the Shoreline Center.

Please watch for the announcement of this special forum in the papers.



Gov. Gary Locke and representatives from the Washington Student Lobby honor Rep. Maralyn Chase with the 2002 Legislator of the Year Award for her work on the Higher Education Committee.

## **PAYING FOR COLLEGE**

Paying for a college education is becoming increasingly difficult for students in our state, especially for those who must finance their own education. Many college graduates are now finishing school with a mountain of debt. Promise Scholarships and State Need Grants are helping some students but the need is greater. I will continue to search for more state financial aid.



## **PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT**

We are making significant efforts to protect and restore Puget Sound and our environment. However, our population has increased by 20% in the last decade, bringing population and lifestyle changes that continue to challenge our ability to maintain the water quality and biological resources of our area. Our state still lacks a comprehensive water policy that will allocate enough water for people, farms and fish. I will continue to work on environmental issues to help plan for and manage the unexpected and unintended population growth which threatens our water and our environment.



## **PRESCRIPTION DRUG REFORM FALLS SHORT**

Access to affordable prescription drugs is becoming increasingly difficult for many of us, especially our seniors. We

worked hard for a bill that would allow the state to use the market to lower the price of pharmaceuticals. The bill died in the last hours of the session but I am committed to finding solutions to the high cost of prescription drugs.



# Report to the 32<sup>nd</sup> District

## TRANSPORTATION PLANS GO TO THE VOTERS

### Statewide proposal

Traffic congestion is hurting our economy, exasperating motorists and damaging our quality of life in the Seattle area. To respond to this, we passed a 10-year statewide transportation plan that, if supported by voters, invests \$6.1 billion for congestion relief and safety improvements on state highways, \$1.2 billion for transportation choices including buses, vanpools and commuter rail, and \$330 million for local transportation projects in cities, suburbs and rural communities.

Some of the projects in our area that will be entirely or partially funded if approved by the voters include:

- Replacement of the vulnerable Alaskan Way Viaduct
- Funding for a new SR-520 bridge
- HOV lanes on I-5 from the Everett to the Port of Tacoma
- Additional lanes on I-405 from Lynnwood to Tukwila
- New transit HOV lanes on SR-99 in Shoreline

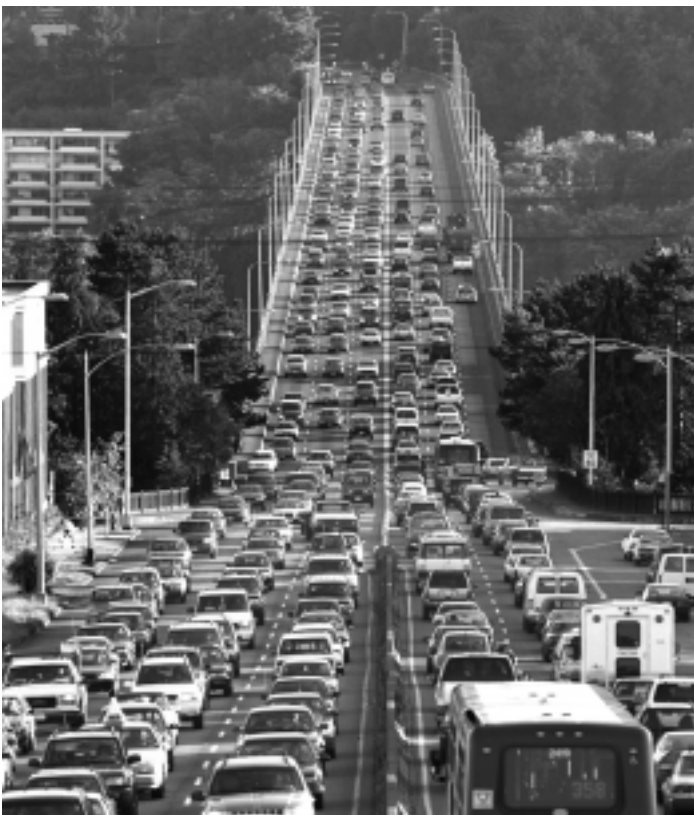


We also approved a regional transportation plan that focuses on the transportation needs of King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties. This plan, which also must go to a public vote, authorizes county council members from the three counties to draw up a plan to address traffic gridlock and present the citizens of the three counties with a revenue proposal to pay for road projects.

Two other measures that we approved to help reduce our traffic problems include:

- The “steer it and clear it” plan to get cars involved in non-injury accidents off the road as quickly as possible. With 60% of congestion caused by stalled cars and traffic accidents, this measure will significantly reduce transportation gridlock.
- A measure to make it easier for transit authorities to approve vanpool drivers. This will reduce congestion by getting more people into vanpools and more cars off of the road.

Finally, we passed an important set of transportation reforms to make transportation planning at the state and local level more efficient and accountable. The new efficiencies law sets measurable performance benchmarks on transportation projects, increases contracting out with the private sector by DOT, and prioritizes the most urgent transportation projects according to safety and traffic volume.





# Representative Ruth Kagi

## DRUG SENTENCING REFORM

My proudest accomplishment this session was the passage of landmark drug reform legislation that will help break the cycle of addiction and crime. So many families are hurt by addiction as drug abusers become mired in an ongoing pattern of criminal activity to subsidize their addiction. The legislation we passed expands a successful new approach to dealing with drug crime that gives non-violent drug offenders the chance to complete a comprehensive drug court program, or face conviction and a jail or prison term.

I sponsored this legislation because I have seen how our prisons have acted as a revolving door for drug addicts. This measure holds drug offenders accountable while giving them a chance at recovery. The new law is



both tough and smart on crime. It lowers sentences for non-violent drug offenders and invests the savings in drug treatment for non-violent offenders in the community and in prison.

I am especially thankful to the many police officers,

prosecutors, judges and advocates who worked so hard to help us pass this legislation with overwhelming bipartisan support. These individuals, who work with the criminal justice system every day, know that we can and must do a better job of dealing with drug addiction and crime. This bill gives us a good start.

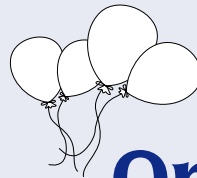
## SCHOOL SAFETY

Anti-harassment legislation for students in public schools has been in the works for the past five years. This session Representative Chase and I worked to pass a bill with strong bipartisan support. House Bill 1444 is designed to keep children safe at school, and requires each school district to adopt a policy prohibiting harassment based on race, gender, disability, or sexual orientation on school grounds and at school activities. All students in Washington State have the right to a safe and supportive school environment free from violence, bullying, intimidation or harassment – and this bill ensures that those rights will be protected in our public schools.

## IMPROVING THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

We also approved several small, but important reforms to our state's foster care system. These measures include:

- Educational stability for foster care children- Many children in short-term foster care are not only uprooted from their families, but also thrust into new schools, potentially hurting their academic performance. This measure requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to examine this issue and work to develop a system that provides educational stability for each child in short-term foster care.
- Maintaining relationships between siblings in foster care- This measure requires DSHS to consider sibling visitation rights in the course of developing a child's permanency plan for foster care.
- Strengthening the relative caregiver program- Many children in foster care are being cared for by relatives. This new law requires DSHS to develop a plan of action that responds to the specific needs of these foster care kids living with family members outside of their immediate family.



## Open House May 9th 5pm to 7pm

Join Rep. Kagi for an open house at her new district office. The office is located at:

**The Shoreline Center**  
**18560-1st Ave NE**  
**Shoreline**

The entrance is on the west side of the building. For more information, please call (206) 368-4691.

# ***Report to the 32<sup>nd</sup> District***

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## **A BUDGET FIX THAT PROTECTS HUMAN SERVICES**

The September 11th attacks severely worsened an already-struggling economy. In just six months, our revenue projections dropped by \$1 billion while the demand for new services, including K-12 education, increased. This created a \$1.5 billion budget hole. Knowing that a tax increase would hurt families and possibly inhibit an economic recovery, we came up with a balanced approach to addressing the budget shortfall. Our budget solution involved trimming nearly \$700 million in state services, borrowing approximately \$300 million from the state's rainy-day reserve fund, eliminating a handful of outdated tax exemptions for businesses and selling off a small portion of our tobacco settlement money.

Each of these measures garnered some opposition, but our effort to convert some of the long-term tobacco settlement funds into a budget solution earned some of the harshest criticism. Yet, in the end we found that using 20% of these settlement funds was a wise investment endorsed by many economists during these tough economic times. The state will receive approximately 90 cents on the dollar, and will avoid cutting an additional \$450 million in services that are critically needed during tough economic times.

As families must do, we tightened our belt, but we did not raise taxes. Despite sharply rising expenditures for health care, education, prison costs and other state services, we stayed \$431 million below the Initiative 601-imposed spending limit. Most importantly, though, we succeeded in maintaining our commitment to public education and the social safety net that protects those most in need. We were even able to restore full funding for our nursing homes, which were scheduled to receive severe funding reductions.

## **CIVIL SERVICE REFORM**

This year, we passed legislation that restructures the civil service system. The civil service reform bills borrow many practices that are used by other states, as well as by businesses in Washington state. The legislation will:

- Update civil service rules – this includes elimination of the use of seniority as the sole criteria for layoffs, as well as the consolidation of unnecessary job classifications.
- Extend collective bargaining rights to state employees for wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment.

## **FINANCING K-12 EDUCATION**

The State's method of financing schools has left many districts scrambling for funding, shortchanging our young people. This session we co-sponsored legislation that would have given voters the opportunity to amend the state's constitution allowing school levies and bonds to be approved by a simple majority of voters (50% +1) rather than the 60% favorable vote now required. Unfortunately, our efforts to put this amendment on the ballot failed by a single vote.



## **LEGISLATURE PASSES PROTECTIONS FOR WOMEN!**

### **Emergency contraception for rape victims**

Under the new law, each hospital that treats victims of rape is required to provide information to these women about emergency contraception and offer it if asked.

### **Help for victims of domestic violence**

Estimates are that 8 to 10 women each year flee for their lives and must change their place of employment in order to escape their tormentor. They now can apply for unemployment compensation while they rebuild their lives. It is a small price to pay if we can save just one life with this legislation.

# Report to the 32<sup>nd</sup> District

## Health Effects of Wood Smoke ~ A Town Meeting ~

**Saturday, May 18, 2002 • 10am-12 noon**

**If your neighbors burn wood, then the health  
of you and your family is at risk.**

Sponsored by Rep. Ruth Kagi (32nd Legislative District)  
and s.e.n.s.e. (Solutions for Eliminating Neighborhood  
Smoke Emissions)

**Third Place Books  
17171 Bothell Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98155-5534  
Phone: (206) 366-3333**

For further information, please contact:

Rep. Ruth Kagi  
18560 1st Ave NE  
Shoreline, WA 98155  
(206) 368-4691



## Meet with Representative Maralyn Chase to discuss legislative issues

**Saturday, May 11**

**11am – Noon at Third Place Books**

17171 Bothell Way NE, Lake Forest Park, WA 98155

**2pm – 3pm at Demetre's Pizza & Pasta**

14724 15th Ave NE, Shoreline, WA 98155  
206-363-1477

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**Saturday, June 15**

**11am - Noon at Dale's Deli**

632 NW Richmond Beach Rd, Seattle, WA 98117  
206-546-0119

**2pm – 3pm at Spiro's**

18411 Aurora Ave N, Seattle, WA 98133  
206-546-2900

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**Rep. Ruth Kagi!**  
**Rep. Maralyn Chase**

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